

In claim 22, line 1, please delete "or 21"

Please add new claim:

29. A method according to claim 21, characterized in that the crankshaft is aged by holding the crankshaft at a temperature ranging from 250 to 350° C for 1 to 2.5 hours, and thereafter cooling the crankshaft to normal temperature.

REMARKS

The above preliminary amendment is made to remove multiple dependencies from claims 11-12, 18, and 22 and to add new claim 29.

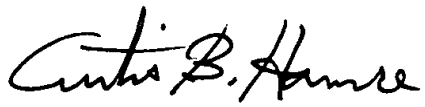
Applicants respectfully request that the preliminary amendment described herein be entered into the record prior to calculation of the filing fee and prior to examination and consideration of the above-identified application.

If a telephone conference would be helpful in resolving any issues concerning this communication, please contact Applicants' primary attorney-of record, Curtis B. Hamre (Reg. No. 29,165), at (612) 332.4722.

Respectfully submitted,

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CBH/jlc